

Biracial Jury Screened in Panther Slay Trial

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BALTIMORE, June 14 —

The prosecution and defense

tentatively agreed today on a biracial jury of eight women and four men for the trial of Arthur F. Turco Jr., 28, a New York lawyer accused of participating with Black Panthers in the 1969 slaying of a man suspected of informing on the Panthers.

Turco, who is white, is a former law partner of Chicago 7 attorney William N. Kunstler. Turco is an activist lawyer who has represented Black Panther defendants in Baltimore and New York. Today, he reaffirmed his plea of innocent before Judge James W. Murphy of the city's Criminal Court.

He also said today he will

serve as his own cocounsel with Kunstler and Harold Buchman, a noted Baltimore civil liberties lawyer. Final jury selection will come Tuesday. Assistant State's Attorneys Hilary Caplan and Sandra O'Connor used up five of their 10 jury challenges today, while the defense used seven of 20. Although 12 jurors did pass preliminary tests during today's five-and-a-half-hour session, they still could be challenged again Tuesday. Of those jurors tentatively selected today, there were four black women and one black man.

Turco was the lone white defendant among 11 Panthers or Panther associates who were indicted last year in connection with the alleged torture-shoogun slaying of Eugene L. Anderson, on July 11 and 12, 1969.

Thus far, Irving Young, 31, a Morgan State College student, has been convicted of first-degree murder in the case and sentenced to life imprisonment. Charles Wychie, 36, has been acquitted. The state dropped charges against six other defendants last month.

Still facing charges in the slaying, besides Turco, are Ronald E. Cox of San Francisco; Clarence M. Johnson of Baltimore; and Henry Mitchell, whose address is unknown. Turco went on trial today on charges of being an accessory to the killing. Also pending against him, but not at issue in this trial, are charges of conspiring to murder Anderson, assault with intent to murder, assault and solicitation to kidnapping.

Indicted in April, 1970, Turco was not arrested until last October. He was seized in Montreal by Canadian police conducting mass arrests under the Wartime Emergency Act. That act was invoked after the kidnapping-slaying of Pierre LaPorte, Canadian labor and immigration minister.

Turco has been denied bail in this country since he voluntarily agreed to extradition back to Baltimore for trial. In recent months, both the defense and prosecution have likened the Anderson slaying case to the murder charges on which Panther Party Chairman Bobby G. Seale and Ericka Huggins were freed last month after a jury in

New Haven, Conn., could not agree on a verdict. Baltimore Panther leaders at a press conference yesterday called for support for Turco. About 70 persons showed up in court today, with about half of them under 30, with more whites than blacks.

Murphy today denied one defense motion to dismiss the indictment and another motion to put persons between the ages of 18 and 21 on the jury panel. Turco joined Kunstler and Buchman in questioning prospective jurors today. Appearing very much at ease, Turco also joked and talked with his police guards, during breaks and occasionally was able to speak to and kiss his wife, Judy, across the gate separating the defense table from the audience.